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Asian Indian Woman-Owned Firm, Received National Minority Business Award

***California-based Businesswoman Honored by MBDA at its 24th National
Minority Enterprise Development Week Awards Gala in Washington, DC***

WASHINGTON—The Minority Business Development Agency's National Director Ronald N. Langston recognized Kusum Kavia, an Asian Indian female entrepreneur and founder of Combustion Associates, Inc. as MBDA's 2006 National Minority Exporter of the Year Award Winner award winner during the 24th National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, D.C.

"The MBDA Entrepreneur of the Year award honors entrepreneurs whose ingenuity, hard work and perseverance have created and sustained successful, growing business ventures," said National MBDA Director Ronald N. Langston. "Ms. Kavia along with the remaining MBDA national winners truly exemplifies what it means to be a successful entrepreneur who has created wealth and jobs for building and sustaining economy and the community."

Born into a large Hindu family in Nairobi, Kenya, Ms. Kusum Kavia is an Asian Indian owner of Combustion Associates, Inc. In 1979, she and her husband moved to the United States. She began a graphic arts and word-processing business in 1982 and later established Combustion Associates, Inc. with her husband.

Combustion Associates, Inc. is a minority, woman-owned multidisciplinary engineering and manufacturing firm specializing in "turnkey" custom engineered solutions to the energy, process and environmental industry clients. With a business model using waste gas to produce electricity, the company saves its clients time and money while meeting environmental safety conditions. CAI has clients in the United Kingdom and most recently secured a US Army multimillion dollar contract. Producing fast-growing, industry-focused products, CAI has patented "Aerolution," a mobile system bringing power where and when it's most needed.

With initial gross sales of \$50,000 and two employees, the firm has achieved \$5.3 million in sales with 20 full-time employees and 40 specialty consultants. Based in Corona, CA, CAI is a client of the MBDA-funded Inland Empire Minority Enterprise Center.

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Kavia was one of 7 MBDA's Outstanding National Minority Entrepreneurs of the Year award winners recognized at this year's 24th Annual National MED Week Awards Gala held on September 1st at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Actor/producer Tim Reid, best known in "*WKRP in Cincinnati*" and his actress wife, Daphne, best known as "Vivian" in the hit show "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" with Will Smith emceed the event. Award winners, their guests and over 1000 conference attendees also enjoyed musical selections by the Morgan State University Choir and the Pan American Symphony Orchestra.

MED Week, established by Presidential Proclamation each year since 1983, recognizes the role that minority entrepreneurs play in building the American economy through the creation of jobs, products and services, in addition to supporting their local communities. The National MED Week Conference is MBDA's signature event for the minority business enterprise community including the private, non-profit and government sectors. The conference promotes and celebrates the vital role minority businesses play in generating wealth, creating jobs and strengthening our nation's economy. It also serves as a forum to discuss the issues, trends and strategies affecting minority-owned business enterprises. This year's theme, *Minority Business Enterprises: Mastering the Supply Chain*, emphasizes how new market realities require minority businesses to strategically position their businesses in domestic and global supply chains.

Conference speakers include U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, SBA Administrator Steven Preston, GSA Administrator Lurita Doan, and Dr. Matthew Slaughter of the President's Council of Economic Advisors. Premium sponsors of the 2006 Conference include BAE Systems, IBM, Chevron, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon company, VISA, FedEx and GVCwinstar. With over 1,000 attendees, the National MED Week features a White House breakfast series, networking events, industry-driven workshops, State of Commerce luncheon, business expo, and an awards gala.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, US Department of Commerce

Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of forty local business centers throughout the United States. Statistics on minority businesses and resources to build and sustain minority businesses are available at www.mbda.gov.

